

[Flu vaccine racket](#)

## Deaths in Korea from Flu Vaccination

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Five people have died after being vaccinated against seasonal influenza since the nation's health authority began providing free shots on the first day of this month.

Yesterday, an 80-year-old woman died slightly more than one hour after receiving the seasonal flu shot in Ulsan, according to the public health center in the northern part of the port city. On her way from the center in the morning, she experienced a breathing problem and fell to the ground, her daughter-in-law reported.

She was immediately moved to a nearby emergency room but died 75 minutes later. She was diabetic, according to the health center. The center is currently investigating whether the shot played a role in her death. Having secured 3.93 million doses of seasonal flu vaccine, the centers are providing free vaccines to people 65 years and older and to the needy residing in government-provided welfare facilities.

A fourth death of a flu shot recipient involved a 51-year-old man from Gyeonggi. Since he was not eligible for the free vaccination due to age, he paid for the shot. He died Oct. 9, two days after the vaccination.

The Health Ministry said an autopsy showed he died of hardening of the arteries, not from side effects from the vaccination. However, he had not been treated for heart disease before the shot.

The first three deaths occurred three days in a row beginning Oct. 5 – all involving people over 80 years old. Without elaborating further, the Health Ministry said is looking into the “possible link between the deaths and the vaccine.”

This is not the first time that deaths have followed flu vaccinations. The largest tally came in 2005 at six, followed by three last year. Of the 3.93 million government-offered free vaccines doses, 3.44 million are from the Green Cross, a local pharmaceutical manufacturer.

As a follow-up measure against the recent deaths, the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an agency under the ministry, advised that those with

abnormal physical conditions should postpone the shot even if they are given notice of a free vaccination. They can reschedule later, the agency said.

The health agency noted that the seasonal flu shot “won’t prevent the A(H1N1) influenza,” which was originally known as the swine flu.

The agency said “healthy adults” need to give preference to senior citizens 65 and older for the seasonal flu vaccine.